

CLAIMS

I Claim:

- 1 1. A member accessible information system for managing member information, and
2 selectively providing member information to individual members, said system
3 comprising:
4 a plurality of remotely connected computers connected together over a network,
5 members accessing member information over ones of said remotely connected computers;
6 means for maintaining said member information;
7 means for searching through member information responsive to an information
8 request from a member; and
9 means for selectively allowing members to request said member information.
- 1 2. A member accessible information system as in claim 1, wherein the means for
2 selectively allowing members to request member information comprises:
3 login means for receiving a member identification and corresponding password
4 and, providing a logging-in member portions of said member information responsive to a
5 request.
- 1 3. A member accessible information system as in claim 1, wherein the means for
2 maintaining member information comprises:
3 a webserver storing static content information and serving said static content to
4 members;
5 an appserver storing applications for use by members and selectively executing
6 stored applications responsive to selected requests from members;
7 a database server storing said member information and also storing procedures
8 and functions, said database server managing said stored member information, procedures

9 and functions and providing selected portions of said member information responsive to
10 appropriate requests from authorized members; and
11 a policy server storing user security profiles and managing said stored user
12 security profiles, each of said members' security profile indicating a level of authorization
13 of a corresponding member.

1 4. A member accessible information system as in claim 1, wherein the means for
2 searching member information comprises:
3 a search engine having full text indexing and searching capability for searching
4 member supplied documents stored in said system; and
5 a crawler continuously searching and indexing searched said member supplied
6 documents,
7 said search engine searching and retrieving documents indexed by said crawler
8 responsive to member requests.

1 5. A member accessible information system as in claim 1, wherein said system
2 further comprises a personalization server, said personalization server recording
3 characteristics of content viewed by members and personalizing content, personalized
4 content automatically being made available to corresponding members thereafter.

1 6. A member accessible information system as in claim 1, said system further
2 comprising an ad server providing advertising content to members.

1 7. A member accessible information system as in claim 6, wherein said ad server
2 manages ad content scheduling, serving and tracking.

1 8. A member accessible information system as in claim 1 further comprising:
2 billing means for tracking member use, deriving member bills from member use
3 and billing individual ones of said members.

1 9. A member accessible information system as in claim 8, said billing means
2 collecting revenues from billed members.

1 10. A member accessible information system as in claim 1, wherein members of said
2 system are members of a common industry.

1 11. A member accessible information system as in claim 10, wherein members of said
2 common industry include suppliers, manufacturers and customers.

1 12. A member accessible information system as in claim 11, wherein said common
2 industry is the food industry.

1 13. A member accessible information system as in claim 1, wherein member
2 information is stored on member computers, member computers being ones of said
3 remotely connected computers.

1 14. A member accessible information system as in claim 1, wherein at least a portion
2 of said member information is located on a central computer with said database server.

1 15. An information management system for managing product information
2 distribution, said system comprising:
3 a central storage storing product information for products related to a common
4 industry;

5 a web server interfacing members with selected product information stored in said
 6 central storage;
 7 a security policy server, selecting product information available to each member;
 8 and
 9 a specification storage storing specifications for ones of said products, stored said
 10 specifications being selectively provided to ones of said interfacing members.

1 16. An information system as in claim 15, further comprising:
 2 an app server storing applications for use by members and selectively executing
 3 stored applications responsive to selected member requests from said web server;
 4 and
 5 a policy server storing user security profiles and managing said stored user
 6 security profiles, each of said members' security profile indicating a level of authorization
 7 of a corresponding member.

1 17. An information system as in claim 16, wherein said central storage is on a
 2 database server, said database server storing and managing member information,
 3 procedures and functions, and providing selected stored information responsive to
 4 appropriate requests from authorized members.

1 18. An information system as in claim 17 further comprising a personalization server
 2 recording characteristics of content viewed by members and personalizing content,
 3 personalized content automatically being made available to corresponding members
 4 thereafter.

1 19. An information system as in claim 18 further comprising an ad server providing
 2 advertising content to members.

1 20. An information system as in claim 19, said ad server scheduling, serving and
2 tracking ad content.

1 21. An information system as in claim 1 further comprising a billing unit tracking
2 member use, deriving member bills from member use and billing individual ones of said
3 members.

1 22. An information system as in claim 21, said billing unit collects revenues from
2 billed members.

1 23. An information system as in claim 21, wherein members of said system are
2 members of the food industry.

1 24. An information system as in claim 23, wherein said food industry members
2 include suppliers, manufacturers and customers.

1 25. A member accessible information system as in claim 21, wherein one or more
2 specifications are stored on member computers, member computers being remotely
3 connected to said information system, the location of remotely stored said specifications
4 being stored on said information system.

1 26. An information system as in claim 25 further comprising:
2 a search engine having full text indexing and searching capability for searching
3 member supplied documents stored in said central storage; and
4 a crawler continuously searching and indexing searched said member supplied
5 documents,

6 said search engine searching and retrieving documents indexed by said crawler
7 responsive to member requests.

1 27. An information system as in claim 25, wherein one or more specifications are
2 stored in said central storage.

1 28. An information system as in claim 21, wherein one or more specifications are
2 stored in said central storage.